

Parenting Views

Grandparents Raising Kids - School Connections

Grandparents, suddenly immersed in the school culture, may feel overwhelmed and uncertain of what questions to ask or where to go to get answers. Grandparents need specific information related to navigating the school system, communicating with school personnel and structuring home environments to maximize children's learning.

Some children in the care of grandparents experience higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems than do children living with biological parents. Significantly higher numbers of children from grandparent-headed homes with learning disabilities and/or mental impairment, repeat at least one grade in school when compared to the general population.

Manage School Enrollment

Grandparents may benefit from networking with parents of similarly aged children and asking questions of school personnel. Grandparents should be encouraged to discuss what documentation, including birth certificate or guardianship, health records and transfer school records, will be necessary for school enrollment. Additionally, they may request a copy of the school handbook or other written information about school calendar and policies. It may be necessary to obtain additional immunizations and medical and/or dental care prior to beginning school.

Meet & Greet School Staff

Meet teachers, administrators, school counselors, para-pros and bus drivers and sharing as much information as appropriate about the grandchild's history. Initiate a home-school partnership. An early face-to-face meeting can make future written or telephone communications more effective.

Plan the Details

Write down bus numbers, important telephone contacts and phone numbers and be familiar with transportation schedules. Develop a plan for transportation on days when there are weather-related obstacles or school delays.

Establish Routines

Children benefit from a morning routine which includes time for breakfast, necessary hygiene, and opportunities to gather together necessary articles. Establish a consistent positive pattern for separating and reuniting. Develop a schedule and then practicing a "dry run" prior to beginning school may also be helpful.

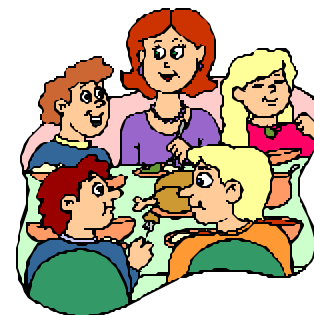
Source: Andrea Smith, Ph.D. & Linda Dannison, Ph.D., for Family Information Services, Sept 2003



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"We cannot
always build
the future
for our youth,
but we can
build our youth
for the future."

Franklin D. Roosevelt



Children & Families—Helping Kids "Belong"

• Responding to Report Cards & Grades

It's vitally important that parents/grandparents work with teachers to learn how they can help their children in the future. Advocates help children clarify teacher expectations. Instead of battling with teachers after the test, adults can strive to learn more along the way so they won't be surprised or feel blindsided. It helps if adults periodically talk with children about their own lives, about how they deal with their own evaluations at work or how they tackle difficult problems. Children need to know that adults have to work through their own problems and challenges, too.

♦ The Shift to New Family

Residents are those children for whom the household is a primary residence and who identify it as home. Visitors are children who arrive for stays of varying lengths. When children are uprooted and without a primary home a sense of security is lost because there is no stable ground where new roots can be sunk.

♦ Providing a Space for the Re-rooted Child

Give children a solid home base. Although it is not possible for every child to have a primary home, when parents have separate households, every child can be in a household that provides some of the amenities of a primary home.

- * Provide a special place to keep personal things—a room, a closet or a drawer.
- * Help make their space familiar and comfortable stuffed animals, posters, a picture on the dresser of their other family.
- * Family activities or privileges make them feel welcome and liked. For example, access to the refrigerator or to treats that are set aside for them.
- * Make connections with other children in the neighborhood.
- * Provide access to email and the Internet even if limited.
- * Have a place to watch television.

Source: Annette T. Brandes, Ph.D. Minneapolis, MN for Family Services, Mpls., MN 2003

MSU Extension
21885 Dunham Rd. - Suite 12
Clinton Township, MI 48036
Phone: (586) 469-6430

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Thankful Turkey Craft

Cut a brown construction paper circle or oval (about 8 inches across) for turkey's body. For the head and neck, cut a much smaller circle and a rectangle from a different shade of brown paper. Cut two scrawny feet & legs from orange paper.

Glue head & neck onto the body. Glue a tiny orange triangle for the beak and little red blob for the wattle. Either draw on eyes in black or glue on googly eyes.

Glue the legs to the body. For the turkey's feathers, cut five long ovals. Use different colors of paper if you like.

Have the child write what they're thankful for on the five ovals. Glue the feathers to the back of the turkey.

Source: www.enchantedlearning.com



Peanut Allergy

Peanuts are among the world's most allergenic foods. They are, unfortunately, being included in more and more food products, either directly or by indirect contamination of food products during manufacturing. Look for "hydrolyzed vegetable protein" or "groundnuts." Peanuts may also be listed as ground nuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, goober peas, artificial nuts, hydrolyzed peanut protein mixed nuts, mandelonas, beer nuts, goober nuts and peanut flour. **There is no cure for a peanut allergy.**

Shopping Tips: Read lists of ingredients every time you shop. Ingredients often change without warning. Look for the words listed above that could indicate the presence of peanut protein. Foods that may contain peanuts include cookies, chocolate bars, chili, egg rolls, Thai dishes, Satay sauces, prepared soups (especially packaged dried soup mixes), prepared and frozen desserts, hydrogenated oil, candy, protein bars, baked goods, Chinese food, potato chips, fried foods, salad dressings, macaroons, icing paste, almond paste, vegetable burgers, vegetable oil, vegetable chocolate from Europe and canned sardines.

- ◆ Highly processed foods with many ingredients are more likely to have had peanut added to them.
- ◆ Avoid imported foods with foreign language ingredients lists.
- ◆ If you have a question about a product, write down the product name and the manufacturer's phone number or address. Contact the manufacturer when you get home. Be direct. State that you have a food allergy and you need to know whether the product contains peanut protein.
- ◆ Breast-feeding moms should avoid eating peanuts and peanut products to prevent sensitizing their babies to peanut protein.
- ◆ Avoid bulk bins. The scoop you use in the flour may have just come from the peanut bin.
- ◆ Beware of "new nut" products. New nut products contain peanuts that are pressed and sold as almonds, walnuts and other nuts.

Eating Out:

- ◆ Always ask about the ingredients and the way a food is prepared before you order. Even if the restaurant is part of a chain there can be differences between restaurants.
- ◆ Call a restaurant between meal hours and discuss the allergy with the chef.
- ◆ Order simply prepared foods. Foods such as baked potatoes, steamed vegetables and broiled meat are less likely to create problems. Avoid added sauces and flavorings.
- ◆ Avoid buffets and salad bars.
- ◆ Avoid Asian and African foods—they often contain peanuts.
- ◆ Peanut butter is sometimes used as a thickener or even to hide a burnt taste in spaghetti sauce, chili or gravy. Peanuts may be used in piecrusts.
- ◆ Ask what oil is used. Most good Italian restaurants use olive oil, but it's best to check this out. Fondues and stir-fries often use peanut oil because of its high smoking point.

For additional information on managing peanut allergy a fact sheet is available at <http://www.msue.msu.edu/fnh/foodsafetyedmaterials/peanutsnew.pdf>.

Upcoming Programs

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk: Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church
8129 Packard Rd, Warren, MI 48089

December 2-Recognizing their feelings and ours; getting cooperation.

December 9 -Alternatives to punishment.

December 16 -Encouraging independent thought & problem solving.

December 23-Effective praise & freeing kids from living what they've been labeled.

Registration required. Call 586-469-6430. (Cost \$7.00 workbook-per couple or individual)

Baby Signs: Babies can communicate before they talk. Wednesday, December 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Verkuilen Building, 21885 Dunham, Clinton Township, 48036. Call to register 586-469-6430.